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PROSPECTS FOR PRIMACY

ARMY WAR COLLEGE STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) This study is concerned centrally with those international dynamics that affect the primacy of a nation (specifically, the United States) amidst a world of nation states. The nation state will continue as the most important actor in international affairs, and certain rankings and hierarchies will continue to form and reform. The most important element of primacy is physical power (military, economic, political), but other concepts also illuminate the status of primacy--influence, authority, superiority, bigness, winning, leadership,		

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20. ABSTRACT

and others. Chance and environment play roles in national status, but so also do national character and achievement.

The United States has ranked as No. 1 in power since the 1930's and as No. 1 in development since 1913; yet widespread affluence has emerged only over the most recent two generations. In military and nuclear power, the United States probably shares primacy with the USSR; in most other elements of power and status, the United States stands at the apex alone: GNP, GNP per capita, industrial production, food production, low tax burden, diplomatic representation, Nobel Prizes, computers, energy, free press, radio and TV, personal citizen freedom, and many others. In addition, the "America idea" (not only material power) continues to inspire foreign admirations. Foreigners see the United States as No. 1 nation and as likely to remain so. Americans perceive less approval for America abroad than actually exists.

American relative eminence will decline; nevertheless, despite all the complex accelerating changes in progress, American primacy will probably extend to 1990 and possibly to 2000 and after. It is of importance to much of the rest of the world that American power remain at a very high level.

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STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE  
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PROSPECTS FOR PRIMACY

by

Anthony L. Wermuth

15 December 1976



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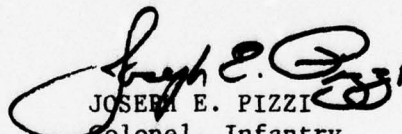


## FOREWORD

This paper explores the domestic and international significance of America's being the world's number one nation. Positive, neutral, and negative aspects of American primacy are considered, as well as the prospects for continued primacy in the light of trends and forces at work in the world.

This paper is essentially a digest of a book-length manuscript, entitled Power, Primacy and Perspective: America as No. 1 Nation, in which its data and discussions are far more fully developed. A limited number of these complete texts are available upon request from the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. An earlier version of this paper, entitled "Being Number One Nation: Primacy and Detente," which focused on the relationship of primacy to detente, was published in November 1975 and is also available from the Strategic Studies Institute.

This paper was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such it does not necessarily reflect the official view of the Department of the Army or Department of Defense.

  
JOSEPH E. PIZZI  
Colonel, Infantry  
Director

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

Dr. ANTHONY L. WERMUTH joined the Strategic Studies Institute in 1974. He holds masters degrees from Columbia University in English and from George Washington University in international affairs and a doctorate from Boston University in political science. A West Point graduate, Dr. Wermuth's military assignments included brigade command; Assistant for Central Europe (OASD, ISA); and Military Assistant (Public Affairs) to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He spent seven years on the West Point and US Army War College faculties. Following retirement, he served for seven years as Director, Social Science Studies, Center for Advanced Studies and Analyses, Westinghouse Electric Corporation. He has written many articles on civil-military affairs in professional journals, and is a member of numerous professional associations.



## PROSPECTS FOR PRIMACY

This study emphasizes one dynamic among nations: primacy.

Theories abound concerning relations among nation states, some familiar since antiquity, others relatively new. Systematic theorizing about international relations, however, dates only from the 1950's. Primacy among nations is one relationship about which not very much has been said up to this time; and while a good deal has been said about many aspects, very little about those aspects or others in the field of political science or international relations is considered to have reached a definitive stage, or to have reached consensus among the differing specialists. Therefore, the following selective discussion of numerous concepts related to primacy, based on consulting an extensive array of "the experts," may provide modest insight but not many rules.

Many of the fundamental issues of political philosophy, despite centuries of analysis by a number of great minds, remain elusive: freedom vs authority, liberty vs equality, the location of sovereignty, the nature of political obligations, the sources of political authority, and others. Over recent decades, the rise of importance of humanitarian considerations has become strongly evident.

A central concern with primacy and its nature should not require much justification. The identification of Number One status is perfectly normal almost everywhere; in a number of human activities, cognizance of success is of universal interest. A number of nations have in turn occupied Number One status in the past; e.g., Spain, France, Great Britain; all, despite varying experiences of incumbency, have found it to be a transient post.

What does being Number One mean? Such a status always exists in some context of inequality; all complex human activities are organized in some form of stratification of hierarchy or pecking order, resulting not only from individual dynamics but also from social and systemic needs. Beyond that condition, each of a number of approaches to primacy provides a degree or nuance of illumination not provided by others: power, authority, influence, superiority, Number One, winning, bigness, leadership, and others. Among them all, power and influence are probably the central concepts in apprehending the nature of primacy. If one seeks to understand how primacy among nations can be attained, it is essential to understand the dynamics of power. Power does not constitute the sole or exclusive agent or context relative to high international status, but it is the primary context.

Theory, instinct, experience, and "common sense" assures us that the drive for power is one of the strongest motivations of men, individually and collectively. In many persons and groups, it is the strongest and most enduring of all strong motivations. Every man possesses some desire for power;

but some men resist the urge, either rejecting opportunities to acquire, increase, or retain power, or satisfying themselves with moderate power or even weakness.

To achieve eminence and influence in the world hierarchy, in the broadest political sense, nations must possess or control enormous physical power over an extended period of time. The indispensable basis for one nation's primacy among nation states is physical power that exceeds, or at least equals, the physical power possessed by any other nation state. Influence based on concrete physical power can be augmented or intensified (or even reduced) among "followers" by certain abstract factors (or lack of them) such as respect, admiration for cultural, political, or social institutions, or hope of economic benefits; but without the base of physical power, other forms of influence are not likely to attain anything like preeminence. Physical power alone will not guarantee universal preeminent influence; but no abstract quality, such as respect, is likely to result in sustained influence comparable to that achievable by the control of physical power.

Why is this so? Possibly because in the real world power continues to be incontestably the primary engine and fuel of international dynamics. Even smaller states harboring disrespect for a more powerful state's political system or other characteristics cannot ignore the relationship between its own interests and the realities of power, and may even come to appreciate, however dimly, the necessity for some states in the world to possess preponderant power in order to be able to maintain some effective degree of international order, from which all, in varying degrees, benefit.

Those who seek power are the ones most likely to acquire it. Many older thinkers link power drives to the allegedly base and corrupt nature of man, a root-concept of Christianity and of the American Founding Fathers. Lord Acton's famous dictum ("power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts



absolutely") is endorsed by many; but a few modern thinkers tend to discredit it.

Most students of power agree that power is preferable to chaos and anarchy, that it will promptly emerge to fill any vacuum, and that it is essential in some degree at every level of organized human activity. Modern perspectives on power see the relationships involved as multi-directional (as with leadership, one with power is "empowered" by forces and agencies external to himself). Lasswell and Kaplan express modern dynamics, including rising humanitarian concern, in their impressive definition: "Power is participation in the making of decisions."

National power, like any important manifestation of power, is heavily, but not exclusively, identified with physical power: geographical, military, economic, demographic. To these must be added consideration of such imponderables as character, morale, quality of government, and quality of diplomacy. Military power has always been a primary component of national power, contingent not only upon military forces in being, but also on the nation's mobilizable military potential and upon the nation's military reputation. Economic power largely makes possible the realization of other forms of power.

Development should be distinguished from power. A nation succeeds in power status to the extent that it maintains great military forces, acquires territory, achieves diplomatic influence, wins wars, constructs alliances, etc. A nation succeeds in development, however, to the extent that it "masters its environment"--providing education, housing, communications, high standard of living, etc.

The central actor in the dynamics of power and primacy, as in every other important aspect of international relations, is the nation state. Nations act simultaneously in world, multilateral, and bilateral contexts. Like

individuals, each nation and its behavior are partly like all other nations, partly like some other nations, and partly like no other nation.

Great powers are those recognized as such by other nations. Despite some caveats, superpowers are widely conceded to warrant exercise of a voice in international matters not of their immediate concern. They are expected to take a leading role in international affairs, acting as "great responsables."

Each nation is distinguished, among other attributes, by its national character, national interests, and national image--or prestige. All of these attributes are important in establishing any particular nation's ranking in the international hierarchy of nations. All cultures are pluralistic; any one "character" can only be representative of a proportion of one nation's population. McClelland's investigations show the effects of one element (or one syndrome) of national character; not the desire for gain but the desire for achievement has been responsible for many of the differences in progress by various nations toward accretion of power and development.

The findings of McClelland and others support the view that man is both creator and creature of his environment; each source partially determines his behavior. In this sense, societies which achieve high relative status as nations must be assumed to have mustered and expended prodigious combinations of intelligent choice, hard work, and creative social organization. To such qualities must be added certain advantages resulting from the operation of chance in a number of ways, and from the favorable operation of broad forces beyond its control.

In addition to national character, nations, as goal-pursuing entities, can be differentiated according to their national interests. All nations protect their physical, political, and cultural identities. In fact, as Maslow, MacGregor, Singer, Winston, and others have held, most men desire the same general classes of benefits in the same sequence (preservation of life, food,



shelter, safety, security, identity, esteem, etc.). Beyond elementary levels, however, different priorities take over among interests. To their direct interests, superpowers add "world interests"--some responsibilities for international order.

Nations are also distinguished by their national images, or states of prestige. Here, perception is important; other nations respond not only to what America is, but to what they think America is. Stable prestige can only be established, of course, by consistent performance over time, and is strongly affected not only by the facts of power but also by the nature of what a nation does with its power.

Primacy can only exist, of course, among some aggregation of like units--for a nation, among a world context of nation-states. Interactions among nations become steadily more complex; a number of concepts are helpful in understanding these interactions, but none is completely satisfactory. Various concepts are used to explain the nature of the existing international context and its workings: e.g., international community, international system, international order, collective security, international organization, international law, diplomacy, and balance of power. Despite its imperfections, the balance of power theory remains the oldest and most nearly satisfactory explanation.

One "supplementary" concept discussed here is morality. Again, three theories vie for acceptance: one says there is no such thing as morality in international affairs; another says personal and international morality are identical; another says morality operates in both spheres but with different applications and emphases. Many modern specialists insist that every national action has moral aspects, and that "reason of state" no longer automatically overrides moral considerations.

Another concept, related to morality, is that of norm. Beyond religious or legal sanctions, norms tend to involve "ought" questions of behavior--"what ought to be done vs what is actually done."

For example, in associations (of which the most overt form is alliance) nations are subject to variously-accepted norms of behavior. A state enters an association in order to receive benefits, such as mutual protection; if benefits are received, a state has obligations to proffer benefits in the sense of reciprocity.

Some stronger powers exercise domination over fellow members or client states; some exercise hegemony, though even hegemons exercise self-restraint in modern times; some, as is characteristic of the United States, exercise primacy as leadership. The leader, the state with the greatest power, assumes extra burdens in a clearly differentiated role of leader, but deals with associates and other states as equals, with as little coercion as possible.

Is conflict likely to continue to affect statuses among states? DeGaulle and others hold one classic view to the effect that all human affairs intermittently come into conflict, that all states compete for advantage. Such students of power as O. W. Holmes and Schumann contend that the great controversies among men remain unlikely to be resolved by means other than diplomacy or war. Such issues involve different aspects of great objectives--peace, yes, but also justice, security, honor, order, continuity of Western civilization, and others. As Kenneth Thompson declared, there is no master touchstone in sight.

Any state in the status of Number One Nation will inescapably be involved in the maintenance of international order; and it is in the interests of other states to see to it that the Number One nation, if it is acceptable in that role, is supported in its capacity to carry out its unique role--to the extent that the role benefits not itself alone but other states as well.

## GENERAL APPRAISAL OF AMERICAN PRIMACY

So far we have described various relevant dynamics operating in the general international context. At this time, in as objective an appraisal as we can muster, we employ that background to focus on various indicators of United States standing relative to the rest of the world.

In 1850, Great Britain was the world's only important industrial power. By 1914, United States industrial power rivaled that of all Europe, while producing more steel than the rest of the world put together. Various indices of power among nations rank the United States as No. 5 in 1875 and No. 4 in 1900, No. 1 temporarily about 1914, and No. 1 "permanently" since the early 1930's. By 1945, the United States was generating one-half of the entire world's Gross National Product (GNP), and enjoying one-third of the world's income. Until the 1970's, the American GNP exceeded the combined GNP of Europe and the USSR.

In the mid-1970's, the United States is one of the world's five largest nations in area (about the same as China, Canada, and Brazil; the USSR has about 2-1/2 times the area of any one of those four); and the USA is the 4th largest nation in population (less than half of India's; about 1/4 of China's).

In GNP (despite imperfections, the most widely used indicator of national power, primarily but not exclusively economic), the much-increased (over 1945) GNP of the United States still amounts to 1/4 of the entire world's much-increased GNP--1-1/2 times the GNP of the USSR, 3 times the GNP of Japan. The United States produces one-fourth of the world's total industrial output, and one-fifth of the grain. America produces and exports far and away more food and fertilizer (and other products) than any other nation.

In GNP per capita, the United States (except for a recent spurt in three small countries) leads the world--67% above the average of Western Europe, 90% above Japan; the American rate is 4-1/2 times the world rate of GNP per capita.



Two significant factors of eminence accompany this status: first is the relatively low tax burden on American citizens (2d lowest among the 13 leading industrial nations); second is the unparalleled generosity of the United States toward other nations--arsenal of the democratic world in both World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War; refuser of postwar reparations; Marshall Plan rehabilitator of both allies and former enemies; provider of unmatched amounts of economic aid, technological aid, and military assistance to other nations; contributor of prompt aid in times of disaster; grantor of extensive private philanthropy; and donator of other largesse.

Reaching an unshared peak of military power after World War II, the United States has maintained military capability as one of the world's two super-powers. Possibly, the status of military No. 1 is now shared by the US and the USSR.

The United States pays 25% of the cost of upkeep of the United Nations--at least twice the portion contributed by any other of the world's 150 nations. The United States maintains the largest national diplomatic representation around the world, and hosts more foreign representatives than any other nation. More than half of the Nobel Prizes awarded since the 1930's have been awarded to scientists, scholars, and writers of a single country: the United States. Among significant scientific reports in eight principal fields, the United States outperforms all other nations in seven of the eight. More computers are produced and employed in the United States than in the rest of the world put together.

In development, or "mastery of its domestic environment," as distinguished from exercise of power in the external environment, the United States has stood first among the world's nations since 1913, and still stands first--not only in GNP per capita and relatively low tax burden, but also in numerous factors that combine to constitute modern domestic strength, such as production and

consumption of energy; median level of education; health and medical services; freedom of speech, press, and assembly; median disposable family income; percentage of professional specialists in the work force; telephones per capita; percentage of women and minorities overcoming discrimination in the work force; radio, television, and news media available (the United States is the only nation in the world averaging more than one radio per citizen); and other aspects of successful development.

Freedom House still lists the United States in category 1, the highest in rating environments of freedom for national citizenries; the USSR, among others, continues to be listed in the lowest category. Does this have anything to do with being Number One nation? How could it not have a great deal of significance, as, for example, developing nations assess other nations for system-models that have successfully combined effectiveness, power, and tolerable human conditions?

The differential of United States power in relation to all other nations has declined in relative terms. Nevertheless, United States power and influence continues to increase, and continues to exceed the power and influence commanded by any other single nation. The USSR has succeeded in achieving rough parity with the United States in a single category: military strength. In no other major category of strength and influence, nor in overall standing, is any other nation in a position to challenge America's standing as Number One Nation.

#### FOREIGN PERCEPTIONS OF UNITED STATES STANDING

Regardless of the facts, how do foreigners perceive United States status?

While observers of the United States have not expressed unanimous approval, many (e.g., Hegel, Berkeley, deTocqueville, Bryce, Myrdal, Revel, Siegfried, Maritain, Bruckberger) have expressed their perceptions of the United States as a unique country, the nation likely to advance farther and earliest in the



realization of objectives common to free societies and in the experience of adjustment to social change likely to affect all other nations eventually.

Scientific surveys in many foreign countries demonstrate that the United States is recognized as the world's most powerful and most important country. The United States is expected to still be at the world peak of power and importance ten years in the future. Asked whether they prefer the US ahead in the struggle for strategic preeminence, or the USSR ahead, or neither ahead, about 2/3 of foreign peoples have expressed preference for the United States to be ahead; this proportion has declined in recent years to about 1/3, while the proportion preferring neither ahead has risen from about 1/3 to about 2/3. At the same time, the percentage preferring that the preeminent nation be the USSR (the only rival to the US suggested) remains in the vicinity of zero. On the whole, members of foreign parliaments appraise the United States higher than do general publics.

Individual foreigners offer many admiring appraisals of the United States--perceiving the United States as "the principal safeguard of free nations"; as militarily, economically, financially, and culturally foremost; as the world's Number One nation during the century's third quarter, possibly the most progressive quarter in world history.

In sum, the United States is widely perceived by other nations to be Number One and to be likely to remain so.

#### AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS OF UNITED STATES STATUS

Regardless of the facts, and regardless of how foreign nations perceive the United States, how do Americans perceive the international standing of the United States? Being the kind of society it is, American society does not produce a monolithic view of anything. An overwhelming consensus is rarely achieved among pragmatic, individualistic, pluralistic, egalitarian American

society, in which perhaps 80% think of themselves as middle-class, if they think of class at all in relation to themselves.

In general, with considerable internal variety of perceptions, Americans have exhibited myopia, bombast, and self-congratulation, to some minor degree; of major weight have been domestic perceptions of America as hard-working, competitive, humanitarian, dedicated to live-and-let-live interactions with other countries, more realistic in action than in rhetoric, and not aggressive, not imperialistic.

Whether one views the amalgamating model of American society as "the melting pot" or "the mosaic," widespread American consensus behind any particular policy is at best a temporary coalition of many partially-divergent interests--a coalition which, except in direct crises, usually cannot bear too great a strain for too long a time.

It may be safely concluded that American policy since World War II, generally speaking, was correct and effective, and was so assessed domestically and internationally (except, of course, by adversaries of the United States). By 1970, however, the environment had changed in important ways. Surveys indicate that American opinion is swinging, mildly, away from internationalism and back toward isolationism. Domestic concerns overshadow international issues. Americans frankly recognize the United States as being Number One nation; it is foreseen as likely to share essential parity with the USSR in ten more years--not through US decline but through faster USSR growth. A substantial number believe the US image overseas to be lower than it actually is.

It may be indicative of some decline in confidence or simply generational difference that, looking ahead ten years, the majority of under-30 Americans foresee the USSR as rising to Number One status by a faint margin (in the Yale class of 1975, 55% said they were "not proud" of the United States). Over the past 10 years, the percentage of Americans holding that the United States

should remain Number One nation "at all costs" declined from 56% to 42%. Some 62% feel that America is "losing power," but 52% say they are "not bothered" by that trend. There has been substantial decline in enthusiasm for military and political commitments abroad.

Thus, while such assessments may echo a perennial tendency to underestimate the cohesion hidden beneath articulations of American opinion, it appears that Americans perceive the standing of the United States to be at the top of the international hierarchy by a slim margin, which is likely to narrow so as to become nominal in a decade. American relative power and prestige are perceived by Americans to be slightly lower than they appear to exist in reality. And Americans appraise American power and influence at a level lower than foreigners perceive.

From this point on, in awareness of the general nature of inter-nation dynamics, of the facts about United States relative status among nations, and of perceptions of United States status by foreigners and Americans, we explore the world and domestic contexts of change, and describe certain potential implications for United States primacy in the future.

#### SOME MEASURES OF CHANGE

Scientist John Platt observed that, although change advances on all fronts, many technological changes are now approaching certain natural limits. We may never have, for example, faster communications than we now have. Nevertheless, John Cogley transmitted to a college audience an impressive measure of change:

Already between most of you and me (who has children your age), there is a yawning generational gap. But between you and your children, there may be a Grand Canyon. . . . For, of all the generations that have grown up in the United States, yours seems to have been marked to live out your entire lives in a state of collective instability and restlessness. . . .

It would be fatuous to expect that America's status of being Number One Nation will not be affected by continuing change. No attempt is made here to



recount a comprehensive litany, but the following developments appear to be among hundreds of important factors in generating more or less profound changes in human affairs:

- About 1955, for the first time in man's history, the majority of mankind became literate.

- It is sometimes difficult to realize that it is only since World War I that war ("aggressive war") has been explicitly outlawed even in principle as a legitimate instrument of national policy. Professor Klaus Knorr speaks of "the normative evaluation of war--war is no longer the legitimate activity it once was." Morris Janowitz asserts that total war is no longer viewed as an instrument for achieving any national goal. Australia's Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, echoed the same theme before the United Nations General Assembly:

War for resources or food or markets by any nation or group of nations would, in modern times, represent the supreme folly . . . There is no war, nuclear or conventional, by which the so-called winner, assuming there was one, could conceivably win back by war the resources used and destroyed in waging it.

- Secretary of State Rusk on May 9, 1964, declared that absolute national sovereignty had become outmoded in the nuclear era; the United States, he said, accepted the fact that postwar events had led it to assume commitments that rigorously circumscribed its sovereignty and freedom of action.

- George Ball pinpoints one enormous political change radically upsetting to primacy:

There is nothing in history to equal in scale or significance the perilous passage of more than a billion people from colonial status to at least juridical independence, compressed within the period of two decades. It has had profound and profoundly differing consequences for most of mankind.

- In 1973 an earth-orbiting unmanned satellite was launched to scan the earth's surface with highly advanced capabilities. Without regard to national boundaries, it has been reporting information on environment, resources, pollution, crop growth, and even glacier movements. A generation

ago, few knew or cared what went on in regions other than their own. Now, as Henry Barbera has pointed out, a compelling dynamic is not merely the fact of inequality, but the spreading awareness of inequalities among increasingly literate, informed, sensitized, articulate, and restless peoples. Out of this cauldron arise the "politics of resentment" and "the politics of envy," advocating redistribution of resources on varying premises such as equality, equity, justice, and obligation. Thus, in many important respects, the entire globe has become a single theater of international relations. Kenneth Boulding says that the network of electronic communication is "inevitably producing a world superculture."

- In the past, particularly in colonies, minimal government spent about 6% of national income; today, populations demand government activities that cost 20%-30% of national income.

- The dynamics of equalitarianism are eroding the status of elites--political, organizational, religious, legal, social, economic--everywhere.

- For the first time, persons over 60-65 constitute a substantial sector of national populations, posing a number of partly unprecedented critical challenges, such as increased economic burdens for the income-earning sectors.

- International organizations proliferate; the International Organization Yearbook of 1945 listed 566, but in 1974, 4310.

- Possibly the most crucial world problem attends burgeoning population: increasing demand for food. In 1974, the New York Times remarked that the four billion people in the world "now draw upon a common pool of food-producing resources, including land, fertilizer, energy, machinery, pesticides, and global distribution systems." / Italics added/

- The proliferation of nuclear capabilities continues around the globe. Six nations, having detonated nuclear devices, obviously possess



nuclear stockpiles. Fourteen others are said to be at or near a threshold in acquisition of nuclear weapons.

- The problem of access, availability, transformation, and reserves of energy sources will doubtless exert changes, now unpredictable, on primacy among nations.

#### SOME IMPACTS ON THE UNITED STATES

When, in July 1969, Americans landed near the Sea of Tranquility on the moon, the first human beings ever able to do so, millions of earthlings around the globe watched them on television screens, and marveled. To even the most phlegmatic, it was an electrifying occasion--the concept, the organization, the daring, the successful execution. The prestige of the United States had possibly reached some peak of world admiration.

Professor Huntington cites an important impact that may be changing: "contrary to the rhetoric of the 'New Left' and the 'new politics,' the record shows that the expansion of American power in the world brought with it more democratic government and strengthened democracy generally . . ."

For the benefit of those who appear frustrated by the failure of the United States, as Number One Nation, to establish world harmony, to effect universal prosperity, or to cure the ills of the human condition, it may be chastening to reflect upon how recently it has been that America entered into a position of primacy.

As A. A. Berle recalls:

In two generations, most of the American population has been lifted from a condition of endemic want and privation to a condition of comparative comfort. The America of my childhood looked much like underdeveloped nations--such as Brazil or Argentina--in 1967. Most of its people then literally struggled against fear and too frequently experienced want, hunger, even lack of shelter. . . .

What does such recency connote?--that America has not wallowed in affluence while generations of foreigners suffered in misery; that until recently, if

there were societies enjoying affluence, they did not include America among them; and that America's advantaged status today was not achieved by long-time exploitation, or at the expense of other nations.

America still possesses valid claims to being the principal fountainhead, for LDC's and anyone else, of the revolutionary spirit aiming to redress genuine grievances and to promote comprehensive growth and social justice within the framework of a genuinely free society. During and after World War II, the United States was a primary force in pressing for the end of colonialism for dozens of peoples, and has usually been among the first to recognize genuine revolutionary regimes. Aiding dozens of nations with massive funds, material, concessions, technology, and know-how, America has been in the forefront of the handful of nations seeking application (not mere rhetoric) of universal human rights.

However, the direction of America's evolving status seems, at the moment, possibly down. Secretary of Defense Schlesinger was said in 1975 to have presented a "gloomy review" of the power balance between the United States and the Soviet Union; he emphasized that "the world no longer regards American military power as awesome." The Economist of London recently employed a heading, "The Fading of America." Wrote journalist Arthur Krock: ". . . the tenure of the United States as the first power in the world may be one of the briefest in history."

Some analysts are optimistic. Britisher Henry Fairlie observes:

. . . it is overlooked that, with the traffic of its commerce and its arms, America carries also an idea. The energy of the American presence in the world is both welcomed and feared, both a cause of hope and a source of anxiety, because with its idea it keeps on unsettling the established forms of the past . . .

It is my own belief that the mere presence of America, what Americans have become and achieved in their own country, has done more to change the world, and improve the life of its peoples, than any revolution in the past two centuries. . . .

From British political scientist Professor Max Beloff:

. . . on the whole the United States is in a much healthier condition than the rest of the free world. I feel much more optimistic every time I cross the Atlantic. At the moment . . . Americans are passing through a period of self-examination and self-criticism. It's a sort of trauma which I hope will end very quickly, because most of it is totally unnecessary.

#### POLITICAL DYNAMICS AMONG SUPERPOWERS AND DEVELOPING STATES

Fundamental misgivings about the durability of the nation state as the principal actor in international relations have been expressed by a number of observers. On the other hand, Karl Deutsch calls this "the paradox of the nation state":

. . . the prospect before us in a world of nation-states for the next 20, 30, 50, or perhaps, 80 years--that is, for the next two or three generations. The future presents us with a paradox. Only the nation-states can administer the broadening scope of politics and public services . . . But these same nation-states cannot defend the lives of their peoples . . . /Italics original/

Adolph Berle concludes:

So, while nations may cling to national values and ideas and ambitions and prerogatives, science has created a functional international society, whether we like it or not. And that society, like any other, must be organized.

Few moderate analysts accept any proposition that preconditions are present for any advanced system of world order.

Most political analysts agree that today only a cohesive society with at least 200 million people and a GNP of at least \$300 billion can claim status near that of superpower. Nevertheless, even superpowers must concede much autonomy. Not even small states will accept management of any of their affairs by superpowers.

Two nation-states qualify as superpowers; both perform roles beyond their borders. Hedley Bull, the eminent Australian analyst, while not endorsing all of the super powers' works, suggests that on the whole they are effective and



exert positive influence on world order, and that they should be given that kind of benefit of the doubt which is the due of those constrained to play necessary roles.

As for expectations that the USSR will become a proponent of peaceful dynamics, political scientist Lincoln Bloomfield sees the USSR as

. . . caught in the dilemma of wanting to loosen up but not knowing how, and fearing above all to lose control over its empire, its people's minds, and its self-discipline. I know of no more insightful observation than that of veteran Kremlin-watcher Bertram Wolfe, who said that there are two things the Soviets try with all their might and skill to avoid: all-out war and all-out peace.

It may be that relationships with Third World nations, not relations with major powers, will set the pace in the future and become prototypes of American relations with foreign countries. In relation to moralistic assertions of alleged American obligations, we should have long ago learned that neither individuals nor collectivities are saintly or wise because they are poor and weak, that they are not any better or wiser than the strong, than those exercising power responsibility--possibly not as good or as wise. There is no logical (or mystical) justification or obligation for America to apologize for not being poor or weak. In comparison with the record of any other nation on earth, the United States has little reason to succumb to feelings of guilt, nor any reason to indulge in masochism over allegations of injustice by idealists, enviers, neurotics, and ideologues.

We do not know all or many principles by which to predict or affect the behavior of another nation. We understand (partially) certain ways of influencing another nation's behavior to some degree; but we are far from being able to guarantee positive or negative responses that we desire. Much of every other nation's behavior, as well as of our own, will remain not only unpredictable but also unexplainable.

In general the prevailing spirit of American exchange has been live-and-let-live coupled with curiosity and exploratory vigor. Since democracies appear to have been distinctly in the minority in the activity of generating and initiating wars, it is possible that the spread of genuine democracy will be accompanied by a decline in the incidence of war.

#### PREDICTIVE SCENARIOS

It appears that in the offing there are a number of likely breakthroughs in certain activities. New political forms; improved explanations of cancer and deviant behavior; solar power; revised terms for the media; restructuring of world food production and distribution; genetic manipulation via electricity or chemistry--these and many other possibilities coming to fruition within a short period of time may make the next decade a period of unprecedented perturbation.

E. B. Haas predicts:

. . . culturally, the world will be more and more sensate, pre-occupied with empirical perception, secular, humanistic, utilitarian, and hedonistic. People will be less and less willing to defer gratification; they will be bent exclusively on immediate enjoyment of whatever they value. Elites will tend toward both egalitarianism and meritocracy. Scientific knowledge of all kinds will accumulate even more rapidly than it does now. . . . The role of government and foreign affairs in such a setting calls for further comment. As accepted values erode, we can no longer expect a consensus on notions such as the 'national interest' . . . More and more people will be able to afford to behave as spoiled children, and American society could become a loose network of self-indulgent groups profoundly indifferent to the issues . . . There will be no world government based on voluntary federation, and the logic of deterrence will prevent the evolution of a world empire. The large powers will not be sufficiently cohesive and purposeful to impose their hegemony in the form of a concert and the small powers--while more energetically independent than in the past system--will still lack the unity of purpose to dominate.

Mihalo Mesarovic, of Case Western Reserve University, and Edward Pestel, of Germany's Hannover University, have identified four propositions that they expect to become universal imperatives:



1. Every individual in every country must realize that he is now also a member of the world community;

2. A new ethic must emerge for the use of resources that is compatible with coming scarcity, emphasizing having and conserving instead of spending and discarding;

3. Attitudes toward nature should be directed toward achieving harmony rather than conquest;

4. A sense of identification with future generations must emerge, abandoning the rationale that "this generation is entitled to exploit all that it can reach and get."

#### SOME GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AMERICAN STATUS OF PRIMACY

Any attempt to summarize in a few sentences must be superficial; still, a few points seem to stand out:

a. Man's desires are infinite, and his attempts to realize them relentless.

b. All men and nations are partly like all others, partly like some others, and partly like no others.

c. America, partly unique, has achieved preeminence firmly, though not exclusively, rooted in the context of power, not much in the context of sentiment.

d. Americans have worked hard and effectively in the process of attaining international preeminence, and other factors have influenced this outcome. To be sure, other peoples have also worked hard.

e. Hierarchy and inequality, among complex networks of collective characteristics, are endemic to the human condition; until world government is universally and thoroughly accepted, there will always be some nation identifiable as Number One.



f. Despite the rise of strong competitors, such as international organizations and multinational corporations, the nation-state will not soon disappear as the primary actor in international contexts.

g. Whether the United States does or does not deserve its current Number One status, with more or less justification than one or more other nations, is moot, constituting a fruitless argument.

h. As the Number One Nation in an anarchic world, the United States, beyond its own direct interests, also legitimately bears some responsibility (not normally or readily specifiable as to kind, scope, and intensity) for the maintenance of international order.

i. Conflict between nations is not likely to disappear in our lifetimes, and neither America nor any concert of nations will succeed in eliminating conflict soon.

j. The possession of great power and the employment of it with restraint appear to constitute the most prudent formula for a responsible Number One Nation to follow.

k. Having analyzed problem situations with fairness and due sensitivity toward the legitimate interests of other parties, the United States should proceed with self-confidence towards its chosen objectives, despite calumnies and invectives.

l. Concerning international interactions potentially involving the United States as nation-state actor (whether as leader, participant, follower, partner, hegemon, primus inter pares, or Number One Nation), it may provide some useful intellectual and emotional perspectives to suggest that:

(1) there are some crucial international problem-situations in which, for a variety of reasons, improvement cannot be expected unless the United States participates.

(2) there are some problem-situations which can be improved by the participation of any superpower or major power; but improvement is not contingent upon that participant's being the United States;

(3) there are some problem-situations which can, at best, be only marginally improved (and at worst, adversely affected) by United States participation.

(4) there are some international problem-situations which can be influenced by the United States only if there exists at least some minimal international consensus that the United States should be invited, for whatever reasons, to play a special (and transient) international role.

(5) it is in the nature of relations among nations that, from time to time, problem situations will arise which the United States should and will enter in some form of activity, at some level of performance, but only rarely, only in connection with issues that are genuinely crucial, only if there is no satisfactory alternative, and only when accompanied by candid explanation.

(6) there are some international problem-situations to which there are no real solutions, no matter who participates.

In the meantime, while disparities, old grievances, and quests for vengeance will continue to retard the growth of a world spirit of homogeneous and humanitarian community, we shall need less and less of grievance and counter-grievance, of bias and counter-bias, of stereotype and myth, of the "feelings" and "impressions" used as guides for action by presidents, parliaments, popes, and premiers; instead, we need more and more data--accurate data, realistic data, verifiable data, plus a skepticism about hypotheses and assumptions put forward to cover the absence of hard data.

Many argue that man increases in knowledge, but few argue that he grows in wisdom. All agree, for example, that the arms race ought to be halted soon;



the real problem is how to do it. We must, for example, substitute cooperation for competition. All right, but how do we do that?

#### TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN PRIMACY

These conclusions are modest and muted; no exhortations to crusade or thundering recommendations are included. We do not, none of us, possess enough prescience to select the certain course of the future out of the welter of candidates.

Kenneth Boulding says:

The conditions of success in the future are not the same as the conditions in the past. What we do not understand, and seem almost incapable of learning, is that in the long run, legitimacy is much more important for survival than either wealth or military power; and that though up to a point, wealth and military power create legitimacy, beyond a certain point, they destroy it . . .

We have set forth herein several compact references to liberty and equality, two values that are said to lie jointly at the very heart of American motivation--and, presumably at least, close to the heart of all human beings, and, in the end, of all strategic objectives. Though both liberty and equality are prized in civilized societies, this discussion, essentially, recognizes the primacy of liberty as social value and objective.

Since it is a prominent characteristic of free peoples that they refrain from roles of predator and aggressor, and since predators and aggressors characteristically strive to eliminate freedom and free nations from the free part of the world, liberty also remains a factor of profound strategic importance. It will continue to make substantial difference--and at times, crucial difference--whether and to what extent America, as the champion of the free world, exerts effort to resist anti-liberty forces, anywhere in the world.

It would be to misunderstand grossly the foregoing discussion to infer that it suggests that America must live in constant anxiety behind ramparts, or that America would not know what to do if it did not have Soviet initiatives



to respond to, or that America need refrain from every opportunity to join Communist or any other states in genuine cooperative endeavors, or that America will become other than the open, generous society that, in the main, it is.

The prevailing tone of this final discussion is frankly based on expectations that American primacy, while declining in relative terms, will remain distinctive and distinguishable, probably until 1990, possibly until 2000 and beyond.

Some reduction in the American standard of living vis-a-vis the remaining 94% of the people on earth can be expected. The "days of wine and roses," of American consumption of one-third of the world's energy and up to one-half of certain products, of rich diets and unlimited gratification, are over.

George Ball says:

We want, by and large, what other advanced peoples want. We should like to be safe from attack and destruction. We should like to improve our material lot and have happy and interesting individual lives. At home we should like to see less crime, more social justice, cleaner rivers and skies and an end to racial inequality. In the lands beyond we should like to have as many friends and well-wishers as possible, but we have learned from history that a rich and powerful country like our own is more likely to be envied and feared than liked and admired.

In a context of change, it is also important to recognize factors which will not change. Concern for liberty is one vital characteristic of America that America cannot afford to let diminish. Otherwise, however proud and grateful Americans may be as we bask in the results achieved by our precursors whose past methods worked out well, our first priority must go, not to preserving or perpetuating any particular method from the past, but to making the future work.

Former Secretary of Defense Schlesinger has pointed out:

. . . it is more prudent to shape the future by our own actions than to let others do it for us . . .

Only the United States can serve as a counterweight to the power of the Soviet Union. There will be no deus ex machina; there is no one else waiting in the wings.

For the United States it seems prudent indeed to conclude that other nations are as they are, and not necessarily as they should be. All have strengths and weaknesses; graces and gaucheries; advantages and disadvantages; moralities, immoralities, and amoralities; successes and failures; virtues and faults. Of assistance in the avoidance of hubris is the self-assurance that none, including oneself, has any monopoly of virtue.

Klaus Knorr suggests that we emphasize even more strongly "a principle by which to steer between ruthless power politics on the one hand and naively utopian unrealism on the other."

Reflecting upon available superpower styles of dealing with other nations, John Scali, Chief United States Delegate to the United Nations at the time, said in early 1975:

Resolving the current trend toward division and confrontation in the United Nations does not depend on our efforts alone. I am convinced, however, that we must walk the extra mile to overcome suspicion . . .

After reasonable efforts to consult others legitimately involved, even "going the extra mile," if necessary, the United States may have to go ahead and, if possible, do what it concludes that it must do, whether in that circumstance approval is extended by all, many, most, some, or none.

It may enlighten and reassure many Americans to learn that there is far more understanding abroad of the exigencies pressing on America (i.e., of the demands made on the Number One Nation) than many Americans think there is, or than some may want to acknowledge.

Confrontation, while perfectly legitimate and possibly the most effective technique during particular and infrequent crises, becomes, over the long run, unproductive as a sustained or frequently-adopted stance, usually vulnerable



to escalation of tension. Likely to be more productive than confrontation in the long run, especially for a leading nation, is concentration on constructive address to resolving the basic problems involved.

There are no trophies or loving cups or "world-championship" flags awarded to the overall Number One Nation. Such prizes and trophies are, after all, mere symbols. The real prize is not the trophy, but the achievement. The real value of primacy is contained in the security and standard of living enjoyed by the citizens and allies of the foremost nation; in the security partially shared by all nations, if the Number One Nation is a peaceful nation, a non-initiator of violent conflict, and perhaps a defender of weaker states that have been or may still be the targets of aggressors; in the sophistication of skills and facilities enjoyed by those citizens who have worked hard and effectively in the course of their nation's attaining primacy; in relatively free choice among available alternatives; and in the attention (even deference, for those who look for such things) paid to the Number One Nation and its representatives.

For America, the undertaking of "first things first" means that, to support the foreign policy of the only free superpower in the world, and in order to remain free itself and contributory to the freedom of others (whether or not they recognize the contribution or acknowledge it), the United States must continue to project the image of strength--to look strong, to act strong, and to be strong.